

tinkergarten®

AT HOME

WEEK OF MARCH 23

Not a Sheet



This week's play material: Bed sheet or pillowcase

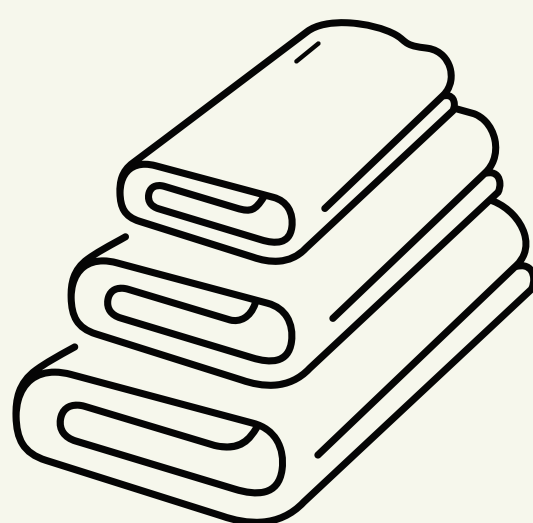
You can inspire endless creative play with an old bed sheet or even a pillowcase. Some of this week's ideas may ruin your linens, while others will leave them just a wash away from totally unharmed. Choose what works for you and your sheets, and be ready to do a little laundry when the week is through.

The design behind this week

This week's At Home activities are designed to promote [creativity](#), the ability to **imagine original ideas or solutions to problems and then actually do what is required to make them happen**. All of our children will need creativity to thrive.

And what forms a foundation for creativity later on? [Divergent thinking](#), a skill you can think of as the ability to imagine many different possibilities in a given situation. Kids are pretty much geniuses at it, but they tend to lose it as they age.

To strengthen kids' natural ability, all you need to do is grab your sheet or pillowcase, follow the prompts below and keep exploring, "What could our sheet be?"





Not a Sheet continued.

Main Activity

Aim to do the main activity together with kids to set the stage. Want to extend the play for the whole week? Try one or more of the independent extensions to follow.

1. Head outside with your sheets and/or pillowcases.
2. Hold up the sheet. Ask kids, “What is this?” Take answers.
3. Then share, “Well, I’m not sure, but this is NOT a sheet.” Pause. “Yep. This is definitely NOT a sheet.”
4. Demonstrate a few different things the sheet could be. Hold it around your neck and become a superhero. Roll the sheet into a long coil and make a snake. Raise and lower the sheet, and you’ve got a raging river.
5. “So, like I said, this ‘not a sheet’ could be a lot of different things. What else could it be?”
6. Have fun using your bodies, imaginations and the objects around you to turn your not-a-sheet into endless new things.
7. No need to rush. Stay silly. Enjoy each new idea for as long as it wants to hang out, and keep rolling, letting new ideas find you.



Independent Extensions

Set the following extensions up to inspire independent play or to give you more ways to play together.

Babies/Toddlers

- **Got cheeks, hands and feet?** Ooo and ahh as you rub a corner of your sheet along your cheek, between your and baby’s hands and across your and baby’s feet. Give baby plenty of time to explore the feel of the sheet
- **Got peeks and boos?** If you have another adult or older child around, work together to lift a sheet or pillowcase up and down and welcome your wee one to lay down underneath or move their body under it. “Where did baby go? Peek-a-Boo!” Show delight with their reappearance. Repeat!
- **Got toys?** Hide some of your child’s toys under the sheet and welcome them to uncover them. Invite your child to hide objects under the sheet for you to discover.

Not a Sheet continued.

Preschoolers and Up

- **Got caterpillars?** Friends can lie on the sheet, grab an end, and then roll themselves up in it until they're all wrapped up in a cocoon. And then they can roll themselves back out and emerge as fluttery butterflies! Repeat!
- **Got a fort?** Not yet?! Build a simple fort and you create a special play space to inspire hours of pretend play. And, all you need is a sheet and a few objects over which to drape it. [Read more on our blog](#) about why fort play is not only super engaging to kids but great for learning.
- **Got sticks?** Push sticks into the soft ground to make uprights, then, lay your pillowcase or folded sheet across the top. Voila! A tiny fort for critters, fairies or favorite small toys!
- **Got at least two of you?** Space friends around the sheet. Hold on and raise the sheet up and down like a parachute. Enjoy the breeze, the sound and the sight. Put light objects (balls, pine cones, feathers) in the center and send them flying. Stick kids inside the sheet and rock them back and forth, too.
- **Got big kid muscles?** It's great for [preschooler's senses](#) to add a little heavy work to their play. Pile on sticks, logs, rocks and see how much stuff kids can haul from one place to the next. Be sure to give each other rides too!
- **Got Squiggles?** Cut your sheet into long strips or cut 2-yard strips of ribbon. Sprinkle the strips (aka "squiggles") outside. [Watch one of our Tinkergarten teammates read](#) *The Squiggle* by Carole Lexa Schaefer aloud, then head out to discover and invent with your "squiggles."
- **Got a nest?** If you have a bird's nest nearby, try to observe together. Make your own pretend nest by forming a circle with your sheet and filling it with leaves, pine needles, grasses, etc. Then, enjoy the bird play to follow! Marvel at [this quick video](#) of a bird building her nest.
- **Got berries?** You can use fresh or frozen berries, spices, and any other colorful stuff from your kitchen to decorate the sheet or pillowcase. Mud also makes a marvelous paint in spring! [Note: This will stain the sheet.]



Not a Sheet continued.

School-Age Kids

- **Got a wall?** If not, make one! Check out our [Great Wall DIY activity](#) and learn to wattle. Build two wattled walls and connect them with your sheet to form a shelter and teach kids a valuable survival technique to boot!
- **Got flags?** Check out our [Catch the Wind DIY activity](#) to see how to cut your sheet or pillowcase into flag-like shapes. Decorate your shapes. Cut slits and weave a stick through to turn them into flags, then let the pretending begin!
- **Got stories?** Make the sheet into as many different kinds of costume or prop pieces as you can to act out a play. (Sheet can also be strung along a tree branch and used as a curtain for story performances!)
- **Got paint?** Unleash your child's inner Jackson Pollock! If you have natural paint, you're all set. Got tempera, thin it out with a bit of water, lay your sheet down outdoors, then let the splatters fly! Share this [Khan Academy video](#) about Pollock's process with kids to help inspire. [Note: This will stain the sheet.]



Grandparents

Connecting with grandparents is sustaining for all involved, and many of us are really missing being with them during this time. Plus, we could all use the chance to play a little bit. So, this week, welcome grandparents to take a sheet or pillowcase off the bed, and have some fun coming up with ideas for what their not-a-sheets could be. Get the whole family on FaceTime or Zoom and share your ideas, and a few laughs too.

Share Your Experiences!

Share photos and stories of your experiences with sheet play and time outside this week using #tinkergarten and #outdoorsall4. Share in our free [#OutdoorsAll4 Facebook](#) group, and we may just feature your photos in next week's email!



About Tinkergarten

[Tinkergarten®](#) is a breakthrough method of raising kids, helping families make the most of the critical window of childhood with simple, fun and engaging outdoor play experiences that are designed for learning.